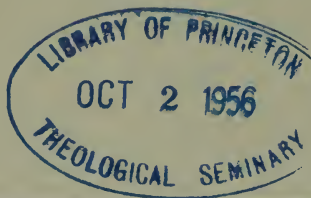


SIAM:

The Need.
The Opportunity.

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SIAM

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Introductory Word

The main purpose of this pamphlet is to supplement the book prepared by Rev. John H. Freeman on "An Oriental Land of the Free" which appeared in 1910. That book treated of the northern half of Siam, the country of the Laos. The southern half of Siam is covered herein.

Besides a general sketch of the country, the progress of Mission work since 1910 and the present situation and prospects for the near future have been briefly set forth.

The needs and the opportunities, as well as the difficulties and the successes of this mission field, are fascinating.

SIAM.

General Statement.

The country of Siam, lying east of British Burma and west of French Indo China, and extending southward contiguous to the Straits Settlements, contains about eight million people of the Tai race or Free People, as Tai is interpreted. In the South they are called Siamese, while in the North they are known as Laos. There is also a large and growing body of Chinese. It is one of the three independent countries of Asia; Japan and China being the other two. Its government is that of a despotic monarchy, the king possessing perhaps the most absolute and arbitrary power of any reigning monarch. There is union of Church and State, the King being the head of the orthodox Buddhism.

There has been, up to the present time, very little national life, and consequently almost no patriotism or love of country such as we recognize and possess in the West. The nation has no history recorded in books, no literature and, up to about the year 1914, there were no family names among the people. At that time the young and progressive king Vajiravudh (pronounced vä-ji-ra-vut—accent on last syllable) was assigning family names to the families of his realm and had compassed the country as far as Chiengmai, the old northern capital.

KING VAJIRAVUDH.

The king is a graduate of Oxford and has traveled widely in Europe. He has not followed the practice of polygamy, which has been common to royalty and most of the wealthy class in Siam, but has steadily maintained by word and precept, in so far as he was able to influence others, monogamy as being necessary for the proper development of a nation. He himself is a celibate and no breath of scandal has ever been associated with his name.

He has shown himself a friend of our missions in his country and has materially aided particular work, notably the hospital and medical work in Tap Teang, in the south and the leper asylum in the north. However, in his attempt to amalgamate his people into a common national life, he is using practically the only instrument which is common to all, that of the religion of Buddhism. In doing this some of the rules and regulations promulgated by the government have seemed to be hostile to mis-

sions and to work directly against the interests of Christianity and the Christian Church in Siam.

For instance, difficulties are encountered by young men who have become Christians when they seek preferment in the civil service or in the army, such as the rule which directs servants of the government to bow before Buddhist idols or join in the Buddhist songs or chants morning and evening, which can be heard from the barracks where soldiers are quartered. There is no open opposition, however, to the progress of Christian work.

DIFFICULTY OF EVANGELIZATION.

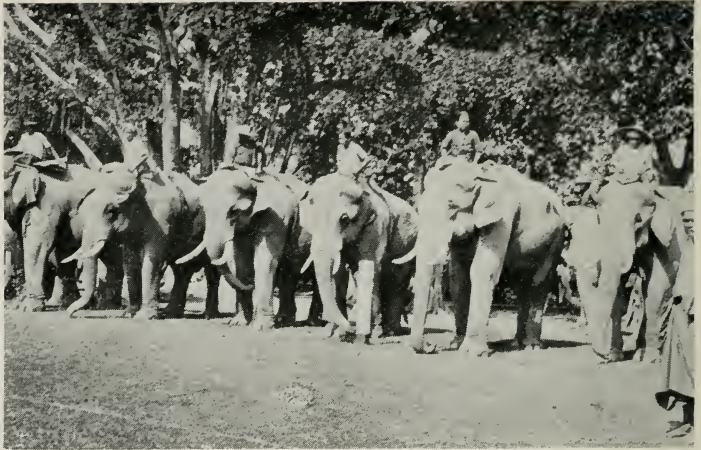
The great difficulty of extending Christianity in a tropical, Buddhistic country, is recognized by all missionary workers, Siam being perhaps the most discouraging and unfruitful field next to those of Mohammedanism. Much encouragement, however, has come to our missionaries latterly, a period of four or five years showing as many catechumens and accessions to the Christian church as the preceding half century showed.

MISSION HISTORY.

Protestant mission work in Siam dates back as far as 1828, when the first Protestant missionaries landed and made limited investigations as to settling in the country. Between that time and 1840 a number of missionaries, Presbyterian and others, landed in Bangkok, the capital, but spent only brief periods there, going on, for the most part, as they were able, to the treaty ports of China. It was in 1840 that the first regular Presbyterian work in the country was organized, and from the year 1847, when Rev. Stephen Mattoon and wife, and Samuel House, M.D., arrived, Siam has never been without Presbyterian missionaries. The Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in our day is the only body conducting missions in the country, excepting some very minor work at one or two points.

BANGKOK.

Bangkok, the capital, represents and epitomizes the entire country of Siam probably in greater degree than London does England, or Paris, France. There is not an important public man outside the city, excepting the High Commissioners, appointed by the King, who are temporarily living at the smaller capitals of monthons or provinces.



Siam is the land of the elephant. He not only has great intrinsic value, but is loved as a domestic animal. The elephant has been most useful in mission service in Siam. The long tours of Dr. McGilvary in the early days, which resulted in the establishment of all the present Mission Stations in North Siam were made on elephants. The value of an elephant ranges from \$700 to \$2000. His chief use at present is in dragging the valuable teak logs from the forest.

Bangkok has a population of some 700,000 Siamese and 100,000 Chinese, but the Presbyterian Mission force has been able to do very little city evangelistic work, because of its limited numbers and the pressing educational work.

The Mission plant in Bangkok consists of:

The Harriet House School for Girls,

The Bangkok Christian College for Boys,

The Mission Press,

The Boon Itt Memorial (A work conducted after the manner of the Y. M. C. A.)

The Christian Training School (Normal).

These agencies and the great heathen city present the field and the forces that need just now to be supplemented by a worthy evangelistic effort, so that the great city may feel in many districts the transforming power of the evangel.

OTHER STATIONS IN SOUTH SIAM.

Petchaburi, and Pitsanuloke to the West and North of Bangkok, and Nakawn and Tap Teang to the South, each presents its own peculiar needs and opportunities. In all, three forms of missionary activity have been maintained, i. e., evangelization throughout the district; educational work and medical work. The latter has always been a prominent feature of the work in Siam.



Dr. Howard Campbell and his Native Evangelists

EXTENSION.

For years the Mission has been hoping to extend its work toward the East and Northeast, where a new station could easily be established at Korat or Roy Ett. Just as soon as funds and men are available these new fields will be opened up.

SIAM AND THE UNITED STATES.

Siam regards the United States as the home of its special friends, for the ministers and ambassadors to the Court at Bangkok have always displayed the best American spirit in all their dealings with the Monarchy; and when we add to this, the

fact that American missionaries have been the pioneers in starting Siam on her road toward development, and have introduced her not only to the true religion, but to Western education and science as well, we can understand the regard in which she holds the United States.

SLAVERY.

A policy was adopted by the late King Chulalongkorn by which slavery, which had obtained in the country for hundreds of years, would eventually be abolished. The present King is carrying these measures to completion.

EDUCATION.

The entire educational system of Siam, with its bright prospects, is the direct outgrowth of the work instituted by American missionaries.

HEALTH AND SANITATION.

Smallpox has been practically eliminated from Siam by the introduction of vaccination by American missionary physicians. A compulsory vaccination law has been promulgated by the King.

Largely through the work in hygiene and sanitation accomplished by our medical missionaries, particularly in Nan and Chiangmai Stations, the Siamese Government last year extended an invitation to the Rockefeller International Health Commission to make researches and develop the work already begun by missionary medical men. Two men are now in Siam studying and working for this Commission.

Sanitary science has been emphasized so faithfully by American missionaries that, largely because of their influence, the Government has recently introduced into the great capital of Bangkok, containing 800,000 people, a modern water and sewage system.

RAILWAYS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MISSION WORK.

The Royal Railway has rapidly been extended North and South from Bangkok, until now it is an easy journey of three or four days from the larger southern towns to the northern capital of Chiangmai. This means new life to the districts

formerly separated from each other by almost pathless jungle and mountain ranges. A journey up the River from Bangkok, formerly required about six weeks. Mission work will profit in many ways from these increased facilities, and in time, no doubt, the North and South Siam Missions will unite.

KENNETH MCKENZIE MEMORIAL SCHOOL.

This school, located at Lakawn, Lampang, has a beautiful new building, and in connection with its work, is a leather manufacturing plant and tannery, the only one of its kind in all Siam. At the present time the Government is buying its entire product. The missionary enterprise is thus showing the Government the way to establish industry in the country, and to commercial independence.

PRINCE ROYAL'S COLLEGE.

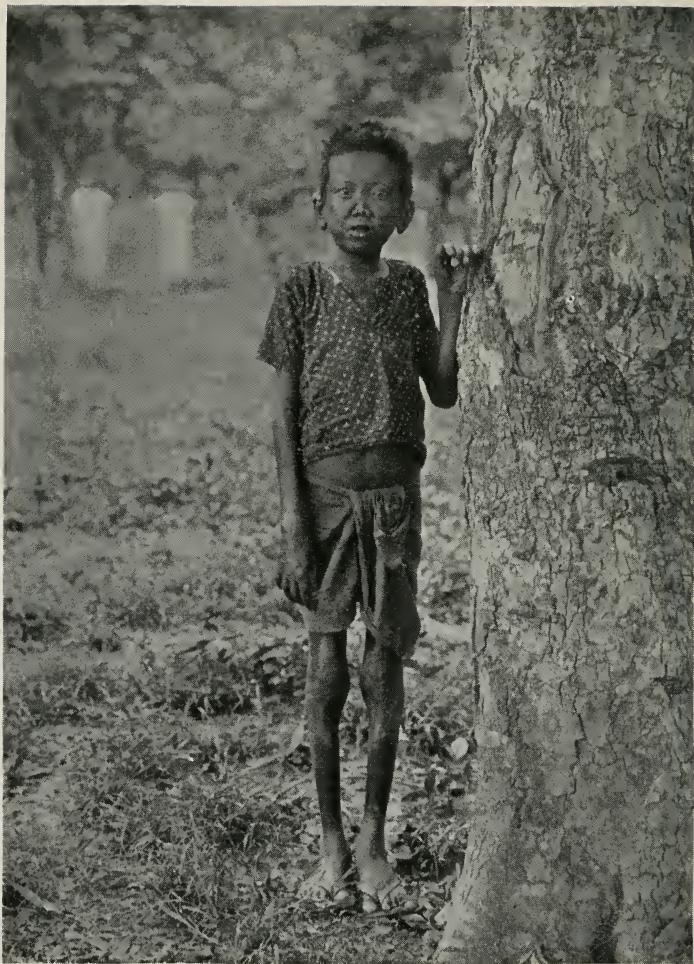
Our boys' school and College of the North, located at the northern capital of Chiangmai, is named after the present King, when he was Crown Prince.

The enrollment numbers 217, students being in attendance from all the Stations of North Siam, some of the boys traveling on foot from Chieng Rai, eight days away, and some even from Nan, fifteen days distant.

The students never fail to surpass the students in the Government schools when taking examinations for Government positions.

By far the larger part of the students are Christians, and there is no mistaking the Christian atmosphere of the campus. Students and teachers engage in evangelistic work in the neighborhood, and leaders are being developed under Christian auspices who will hold places of responsibility before the people in all the provinces of the Kingdom.

Many are taking courses which will prepare them to enter the Theological School or the new Medical School, both located at Chiangmai, and indeed the leaders in every department of life of the people of the North, including skilled craftsmanship and agriculture, are coming from Prince Royal's College. This institution is, and will continue to be, the leading educational institution of Northern Siam. President William Harris has carefully planned for additional buildings and equipment for which some \$40,000 will be required.



This boy Ai Sam is one of the nearly 200 lepers in the Chiengmai Asylum. His father and mother and their six children all were lepers. The mother and three children died without knowing that there was an Asylum in Siam. The father and three children came to the Asylum and all became Christians.

THE CHIENGMAI LEPER ASYLUM.

Siam is spotted with leprosy. It is estimated that there are 10,000 of these sufferers in the Kingdom. They are feared, hated and cursed, are turned out from their homes by their families who do not know how to take care of them. They wander up and down the roads, begging and utterly hopeless in their dire misery. The North Siam Mission, however, has established a leper asylum at Chiengmai on an island of 160 acres presented to them for this purpose by His Majesty, the King. In this haven some 200 lepers have been gathered and live in neat brick houses amid cleanly surroundings. They receive about 40c a week each for subsistence. The entire colony has become Christian, and recently they gave out of savings from their allowance money a sum equal to \$12 gold, "To be sent to lepers in some other land who are less fortunate than ourselves."

This work has called the attention of all classes of people in Siam to the beneficent character of Christianity in the most striking way, and yet it is only one illustration out of many of the benefits that spring out of the religion of Jesus Christ. This asylum will, no doubt, lead the Government to establish other leper asylums where lepers will be segregated and as a consequence the country will gradually be freed from the terrible menace.

RECENT PROGRESS AND SUCCESS OF MISSION WORK.

There have been more accessions to the Christian church and more adherents gathered around the church in Siam during the past five years than during the entire preceding fifty years. There is a total membership in the church of approximately 8,000, a very large proportion of this number having come in through the agency of medical evangelistic work which was vigorously carried on during recent severe epidemics of malignant malaria. This disease sweeps through villages, destroying lives rapidly, and the missionary physicians bringing effective remedies have been able to save whole districts from the scourge. This service has naturally turned the hearts and minds of the people toward the missionaries and their message, and great numbers learning the reasons for the service rendered them have come to the church to find God and rest from lives of fear and anguish.

His Highness, Prince Songkla, Brother of His Majesty, the King, is twenty-four years of age and has recently come to the United States to study the science of hygiene and sanitation. He has spent ten years in study in Europe, but now comes to America to be fitted to help his country in these ways.

The Prince has recently given out the following testimony to the value of Mission Work in Siam:

"I came here, both because I believe I can learn most here and because we need American sympathy and help. We wish Americans to pay attention to Siam. We wish to pay attention to America. We want to trade with you, particularly to get your agricultural implements, and we want you to take an interest in us.

"King Vajiravudh is the only independent Buddhist sovereign in the world, and as such is regarded as the chief defender of the religion of the Buddha. Nevertheless no foreigners are more welcome to Siam than American Missionaries.

"They have done wonderful things for us. They come not to make money, but to spend it. They do not quarrel over the manner in which the Sacrament shall be administered. They teach, they minister to the sick, they build hospitals and schools. The Presbyterian Board has aided greatly our educational authorities.

"The work of the missionaries from America is constructive. They submit wonderfully to our laws. They do not interfere in our politics. They teach the young to be clean, honest and patriotic, not to the United States, but patriotic to Siam. We owe a great debt to the American Missionaries. Their deeds are the kind that will live after them, a constant inspiration for good."

A UNIQUE DEBATE IN SOUTHERN SIAM.

Dr. Eugene P. Dunlap gives us the following interesting account of what was known as a preaching service recently called together by the High Commissioner of the Puket District. It was, in reality, a presentation of Buddhism by a Buddhist and of Christianity by one of the native Christians. Dr. Dunlap's description follows:

"The unique preaching service was called on March 17, 1916, by His Highness, the High Commissioner of the Puket District. His Highness spent seven years in London and attended Oxford with the present King of Siam. He sent out a general



Siamese School Children at Play

invitation to the Buddhists of Tap Teang, and chose the Buddhist Bishop of Nakawn Sri Tamarat to represent Buddhism and to speak on the Five Commands of Buddhism for the laity. He also extended a cordial invitation to all Christians of the Tap Teang Church to attend the service. Nearly all the Christians and missionaries were present. The High Commissioner invited our Senior Evangelist to represent Christianity, and no restrictions were placed upon him. He was given equal liberty with the Buddhist Bishop. The Bishop has been in the Buddhist Priesthood for more than 30 years, and about 20 years ago he was made Bishop by the late King of Siam. He was a fellow student with the late King's brother, who is a Buddhist Archbishop of Siam. The Senior Evangelist, Kroo Sook, was formerly a Buddhist Head Priest.

"About 800 guests were present and paid close attention to the preaching. The Bishop preached earnestly for more than one hour, and was listened respectfully to by all. But there was no demonstration.

“The High Commissioner presided over the entire service, and after the Bishop’s sermon he invited our Senior Evangelist, Kroo Sook, to preach, and for more than one hour the grand old man poured out the earnestness of his soul for Jesus Christ, his Lord. His theme was, “Why I Became a Christian.” He told of Jesus’ wonderful love, so manifest in his humble birth, and so fully manifested in his death for sinful men, on the cross, and urged all to rest in Him for the salvation of their souls. His earnestness so impressed his hearers that they responded with happy shouts of approval, and when he closed, almost exhausted by his earnest efforts, the Bishop was the first to shake his hand with hearty congratulations.

“He was followed by the congratulations of the High Commissioner, who, laying aside all distinctness of rank, embraced the evangelist and said, ‘Where did you learn to preach? Did you learn how in the Buddhist Temple?’ He replied: ‘No, Your Highness, I learned to preach from my old teacher, Maw Dunlap.’ ‘Well,’ said His Highness, ‘I am glad, and I trust you will continue to preach thus all your life.’”

The whole town was deeply impressed by Kroo Sook’s account of Christianity, and ever since there has been an increased inquiry after the real Spirit of Christ. Siam is now open to earnest effort for Him.



Little Mothers, North Siam

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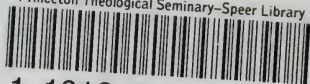
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